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Neglected Arabia





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*A Typical House of the Better Sort at Mohammura. It is in a house similiar to this that the "First Lady of Kuwait" lives. See page 19.*

# NEGLECTED ARABIA

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# Neglected Arabia

Missionary News and Letters

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THE ARABIAN MISSION

## The Present Urgent Medical Situation

By P. W. HARRISON, M.D.

This article was written at Hassa, which is between Riadh and Bahrein, probably on Dr. Harrison's return journey from his visit to Chief Ibn Saoud. See article on "Dr. Harrison's Visit to Riadh and Its Significance."



Dr. Harrison ready for the Dispensary. Preaching with which the Medical Missionary begins his day.

There is nothing new in the statement that Arabia needs more doctors. She has always needed more. But certainly never since the Mission work was begun in her borders has the need been what it is now.

The medical work in Matrah is closed. It has been closed for four years. Other missionary effort has continued and not unsuccessfully, but any man who has travelled among the friendly, hospitable, kindhearted people of that province of Oman, and has seen how practically every city and village is open to the Doctor, will have a mist over his eyes, or at least a cloud in them as he thinks of their physical and spiritual need and their present neglect. There are not many districts in Arabia where men collect in the room of the itinerant missionary, when work is over at night, with the simple request that he read to them out of "the Book." But the friendliest and most

receptive corner of our field is practically abandoned because its penetration requires a Doctor, and no Doctor is to be had.

The Hospital in Basrah is closed down, and that just as the dawn of a new day appears. Through evil report and good report, among enemies as well as friends, the work of that institution and its impress on the whole northern part of Arabia was such that men "thanked God on every remembrance of it." The reputation of its professional triumphs, and the spirit of Christ in it, was a reinforcement to the work of missionaries hundreds of miles away. But it is empty now, when of all times its work is most needed. Mesopotamia is face to face with a new epoch. Old things have passed away. Irrigation, prosperity, efficiency, civilization, are what the new era under the British is going to mean, if human judgment can be relied on at all. We ought to enlarge the hospital in Basrah, and definitely plan for the creation of an Arab Medical profession, using it as the necessary base. The possibilities open out like a page in Arabian Nights. Basrah is a major strategical point in the present world situation. But a Hospital cannot run without a doctor, so the Hospital is closed.



Nurse Sundri      Dr Harrison      Mrs. Harrison      Mrs. Dykstra  
Eating an Arab meal Arab fashion at Dareen, Hassa

Hardly less is to be said of Upper Mesopotamia. A Doctor would have been an incalculable asset to the work in the past. He is needed even more now. Arabs exiled for years from Amara and other places in Mesopotamia, by the intolerable oppression of the Turks, are planning to return as soon as the war is over. The opportunities and blessings of civilization as well as its temptations and dangers are to be given to a considerable part of the Arab race. The air is full of confident expectation. Such an opportunity the Church of Christ has not had before. To overcome hostility, to melt prejudice, to make possible the whole work of Christ which should be done to those



who constitute such a great opportunity, a Doctor is needed. But none is at hand. When established hospitals are being closed, how are we to undertake new work?

And as to Inland Arabia, words fail us. There has been the object of our hopes and prayers and the goal of our plans and endeavours for the past twenty-eight years. Now as the doors swing open, who is to enter? Kateef would be glad to have a resident Medical missionary now. Hassa probably could have been entered before this if any one had made the effort. Riadh itself, the key position of Arabia, and indeed as some of us think, of all Islam, is opening its doors. Of course, if we have an opportunity to enter Riadh it will probably be done, but the only way it can be done now is by the abandoning of another of our coast Hospitals.

This is the day of big things. The vision of Christ's universal reign is becoming more and more the supreme aim of his church. There has never been a time when the finer ideals of service in medicine have held so complete a sway in that profession. The vision of a world whose diseases have been conquered, of a humanity thus redeemed, is keeping the finest men in medicine patiently working day after day in the laboratory, and sending them out into Africa and Asia to give to the nations there some of the blessings we enjoy at home.



Dr. and Mrs. Harrison at an Arab tent, Dareen

It is to men who have caught something of the vision of the real glory of medicine and above all to men whose hearts burn with the fire of Christ's own ambition for His world that Arabia makes her appeal. Let Hassa serve as an example. Here is a city of probably thirty thousand inhabitants, surrounded by date gardens which stretch for miles. There are fifty-one cities and villages in this area, many of them cities of thousands, some of them mere villages. The evidences of material prosperity are everywhere. The whole district is

one of date gardens, wheat fields, and beautiful stretches of dark green alfalfa. It is the richest district of Arabia, and doubtless also the most densely populated. The inland bedouins come here to trade from almost the entire eastern half of the peninsula. The Church of Christ occupies no point in Arabia comparable to this in strategic importance.

But it is a bigoted fanatical place, whose doors are shut to every one except the Medical Missionary. What are the opportunities for medical work? Opportunities of the sort that break men. A mass of diseases to be treated, of surgery to be done, such as ten men could not overtake. Indeed, fifty men could not handle it properly. A sanitary situation as bad as human ignorance and filth can make it. The worker in Hassa with his little hospital must undertake single-handed the fight against the forces of hygienic depravity of the whole eastern part of Arabia. The inertia of centuries, ignorance so profound that it is almost sublime, some of the bitterest religious prejudices of the world, will all be pitted against him. But an inch at a time he will forge ahead and finally win, because the Promises of God and the Laws of God are with him.

To the man of softness and ease, Arabia has little to offer, but to the man who thirsts to fight for the bodies and the souls of men, against everything that the world, the flesh, and the Devil can muster, it has everything to offer. Hard tasks for strong men. Dangerous tasks for brave men. Long, tedious, back-breaking tasks for faithful men, who serve the Lord Christ.

## Progress

BY MRS. EDWIN E. CALVERLEY, M. D.

There are some mission countries in which missionaries are looked upon as gods. As in the case of the early disciples it is sometimes necessary for the messenger of the Cross to restrain those whom he has helped from worshipping him as divine. In Arabia we are free, at least, from this drawback. The missionaries to the descendants of Ishmael are considered by those whom they would serve not as gods, but as infidels.

"Kafirs," they call us; "infidels." Should the missionary stop for a cup of tea in the tea shop by the road side, he may not, perhaps, be refused the beverage, but he must not be surprised if, after he has drunk, the owner of the shop dash the cup to the earth breaking it into a thousand bits lest some true believer be polluted by partaking from the same receptacle. "Unclean dogs," "eaters of pigs," "Would you go to *them* for medicine?" our enemies ask of would-be patients. Sometimes we hear the sick in the hospital talking quietly among themselves after they have been treated kindly and eased of their sufferings—"Why do people call them kafirs?" they ask.—"Surely they fear God; they are more merciful than the Moslems." "Have nothing to do with them" adjures the ignorant, fanatical mullah, "do not even listen to the telegrams which come daily with news of the war; beware of them; they are English magic!"

There is a house in Kuwait which is the home of the highest Moslem religious official to be found in all the country round-about. Wealthy in the extreme, he owns houses and gardens galore both here and in Basrah. He is an aristocrat, proud to be holding the position held by his father before him. He has travelled extensively in India, Egypt and Turkey, and loves to discourse at length, in English, upon his experiences. For a Mohammedan to be able to speak English is a great distinction here in Arabia. In his harem are perhaps the most beautiful Arab women we have seen, all women of high birth and gentle breeding.

It was to the harem of this gentleman, that I was called soon after our arrival in Kuwait, six years ago. His house was on the edge of the town, a long walk from our home, but small matter that, when a new and untried missionary doctor receives a call from an important personage! So along we went, the little black bag and I.

From the doorway in the wall I was ushered into a huge courtyard and from there into a long reception room carpeted with wonderful Oriental rugs. All along the sides of the room sat women, young and old, with their black cloaks drawn close about them. At one end a bed was spread on the floor and on the bed lay a lovely young bride, the most beautiful of all the women, and the daughter of the master of the house. I was received with the necessary greetings in low restrained tones and great dignity. Then I was allowed to sit at the side of the patient and take her temperature and feel her pulse and by other means ascertain the nature of her illness. She was not in a dangerous condition. Throughout all the examination I was conscious of that row of black robed women, silent, staring, unfriendly in their attitude. "Kafir," "Kafir" the very silence seemed to be shrieking. Finally when I felt ready to prescribe I took out a bottle of tablets. "One of these tablets every three hours," I was saying. "O no," answered the patient's mother, "give her a liniment if you like, but no internal remedy. We are not willing for her to take any internal medicine." So a liniment was prescribed. Perhaps coffee was served, I can't remember that, but I know that it was with a feeling of relief that I reached the open road once more, where the sky and the sea and God's own sunshine reached out to me hands of welcome with no cry of "Kafir, Kafir."

It was more than five years after this experience that we returned to Kuwait after furlough in America. Many things had happened during the interval. The missionaries had left their former native house in the centre of the town and moved out to the edge of the desert to live in their comfortable bungalow and to work in their well equipped hospital, near neighbors of our aristocratic friends of whom I had been telling you. Meanwhile our women missionaries had been making friends by the score in this new neighborhood. "We must go to call on the family of ———," they told me soon after my arrival. "They ask about you and want to see you." "What!" I exclaimed. "Do you

mean to tell me that those women have become friendly?" And then I related my uncomfortable experience of the early days in Kuwait. We went to call one day and how they welcomed us! They wore their prettiest dresses in our honor and offered us their choicest refreshments. "Do you remember that time you called on us so long ago?" they laughed. "You did look so scared."

Since then, the invitations to the house of these neighbors have been constant and urgent. Gifts of food of various kinds are often brought to us by the slaves of the household. When our baby was lying very ill, messengers came from these friends with words of loving sympathy, solicitous to hear of the welfare of the little one. One moonlight night, as the greatest honor these purdah ladies could offer us, they came to call upon us and to see our new house. We had promised that no man should be on the premises, for it is only with the utmost precautions that these women are allowed to leave their home. They were like children out of school, light hearted and irresponsible. They went through the rooms of our new house with exclamations of delight and admiration. They walked on tiptoe and talked in whispers in the nursery, pausing to peep at the little sleeping forms in the cribs. They sat at the dining room table for refreshments with many laughing comments about one another's table manners, for they were used to eating on the floor. Dr. Mylrea's gramophone did its best for the occasion and the guests especially enjoyed the "laughing song" record, accompanying the music with much merriment of their own. When the time for departure had come, our friends were loathe to go. There was, I am sure, no thought of "Kafir" on this occasion.

We are frequently called upon to prescribe for various members of this household, from the father to the smallest infant, and the patients never object to taking remedies internally. Recently the gentleman took occasion to thank us for our professional care of himself and his family, and the women and children of the town.

But this is not all. For a long time we felt that in our intercourse with these friends religious subjects were prohibited. We have prayed and waited for guidance. Now, of their own accord the women ask us questions about our faith, and tell us that they have read the New Testament, while they request us to give them illustrated Bible stories and a copy of the Psalms. The word of God is in their hands; the results are in His hands.

The progress of the Kingdom seems slow in Arabia. Converts are not numerous. Is it not a great thing, however, that not only houses such as we have described, but whole towns are being won over from hatred and scorn to friendliness and willingness to hear our message? They cannot believe if they will not hear, but when they hear, the word of God is as a two edged sword. They are "coming, coming; yes, they are," even from Arabia.

## The Present Need

BY C. STANLEY G. MYLREA, M. D.

Arabia is the hardest mission field in the world. This has been acknowledged again and again till to-day it is almost a platitude. The problem of Islam is the most difficult of solution of any of the Missionary problems, and though the outlook for the success of missions to Moslems is brighter to-day than ever before, still the fact remains that Islam is a stubborn, powerful, courageous and fanatical foe, proud in its own strength and very far from being beaten as yet.

Especially true is this estimate of the position in ancient Arabia where education is still non-existent and where true civilization is not wanted except by an insignificant minority. Arabia was Islam's birth-place and the spirit of the country is the same old uncompromising spirit that characterized the Arab of Mohammed's days.

The spirit of absolute superiority to and intolerance of all other religions, whose followers are all summed up under the one contemptuous heading—Unbelievers.

The spirit of absolute certainty that their religion cannot be defeated but that Islam will ultimately dominate the world, and that all nations, creeds and tongues will one day own the prophet of Arabia as the last of the prophets, the seal of God.

The spirit of Pharisaic self-righteousness which fasts and tithes and thanks God that it is not as other men are, that makes clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within is full of extortion and excess.

The spirit of hardness of heart, perhaps the most prominent trait in the Semite character—the same spirit that persecuted and killed the prophets of old—the same spirit that finally crucified the Lord of All.

The spirit that wearied Jehovah in the wilderness and wore out Christ in Jerusalem, till He cried out heartbroken, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life."

The spirit that murdered Raymond Lull and that has been responsible for the hundreds of thousands of murdered Armenians.

The spirit of contempt for the Christian missionary who in their opinion is wasting his time and cannot possibly attain any measure of success proportionate to the effort he is making.

This was the spirit which the pioneers of Christianity in Arabia had to face. They accepted the challenge to their faith and went out in the name of the King of Hosts whose armies were being defied by the Philistines.

Arabia was only given the Gospel some twenty-eight years ago. It was almost the last country to be occupied by the missionary. The church was a long time making up its mind to carry the war against Islam right into the enemy's camp. Thank God for the spirit of the pioneers which shall yet prove stronger than the spirit of Islam.

The task which faced those pioneers was stupendous. How were they to make the self-sacrificed Moslem feel the need of Christ? There were no congregations to preach to; on the contrary they were shunned and avoided by everyone. Bazaar or street preaching was forbidden. It was a case of casting the bread upon the waters and the distribution of God's Word was steadily persisted in. Precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little, the Arab was to begin to know Jesus Christ at first hand, as he is portrayed in the Gospels and not as Moslem tradition paints Him.

These early efforts were along the lines of a ministry of friendship. It was soon discovered that there was another ministry which would prove a mighty force in the spreading of the Gospel in Arabia. Sickness and disease were all around them and though our pioneers were not doctors they were soon obliged to do a considerable amount of medical and first aid work. The value and efficiency of Western remedies made them many friends, opened many doors, and gave them the opportunities they sought, for conversation and personal work. They began to plan medical work with the result that first Basrah and then Bahrein were developed by our medical men. The Mason Memorial Hospital at Bahrein was opened in 1902 but on account of the difficulties of acquiring land in the Turkish Empire it was not until 1910 that the Mission owned its Hospital Building at Basrah, the Lansing Memorial Hospital. In 1908 Dr. Thoms who had already done pioneer medical work in Bahrein went down to Matrah near Maskat and opened up our third medical station. In 1910 Kuwait was visited by Dr. Bennett and negotiations commenced which ended in our being able in 1912 to begin steady medical work in that station. In 1914 a fully equipped, if somewhat small Hospital was opened in Kuwait, bringing our total number of Hospital buildings in the Persian Gulf up to three, while Medical work could be carried out in four distinct centres. It should be mentioned that these four centres do not include the dispensary for Women at Maskat where only women are treated. In other hospitals men and women are treated.

So much for the Plant. How about the personnel? The position is critical in the extreme. In 1912 we lost Dr. Thoms who died as the result of an accident. He has never been replaced. In 1916 we lost Mrs. Bennett, M.D. from typhus and at present we have to face the possibility that her husband Dr. A. K. Bennett who is at home on furlough may not be able to return to the field. It is likely also that health reasons will prevent the return of Dr. Worrall our pioneer Medical man in Basrah. Finally it is not at all certain that Dr. Van Vlack, an independent worker from the University of Michigan, who has just gone home on furlough will be able to come back. The only

medical men left whose connections with the Arabian Mission are reasonably secure, are Dr. Harrison of Bahrein and Dr. Mylrea of Kuwait. This means that with both of them on the field, two hospitals out of four are without a doctor. At this time both Basrah and Matrah are unmanned. Shall this state of affairs be allowed to continue? Shall the mightiest agency for Evangelization in Arabia be thus crippled and must all the work that has been so patiently and so laboriously built up be allowed to die of inanition? Had it not been for our medical men it is probable that Kuwait, at all events, would still be without a missionary, and in the present fanatical state of Bahrein, medical work is almost the only kind of work possible. Our medical clock is running down. It must be wound up very soon, or it will stop absolutely.

Since the need is so imperative, some of us have thought that if a couple of men would come out at once on a short term agreement and go to work in the Hospitals immediately upon arrival on the field, not stopping to learn the language but doing everything through an interpreter, this would tide us over until the new men whom we must have, should have learned the language and qualified themselves to take charge as a regular missionary. Short term men are only an emergency measure. We want the real thing, men who are glad and willing to put their lives at the disposal of the first medical missionary—The Great Physician.

“At even ere the sun was set, The sick O Lord around Thee lay,  
O in what divers pain they met. O with what joy they went away.”

The Missionary Physician's life is not all hardship by any means. In fact the probability is that he has far more variety and novelty in his professional work than the average doctor at home. Tropical medicine is still comparatively virgin soil with unbounded possibilities for the man whose talents lie in the direction of research. Some of the greatest discoveries in medicine of recent years have been made in Tropical Medicine, witness the work of Manson and Ross in Malaria, of Reed in Yellow Fever, of Bruce in Malta fever, etc., etc.

If surgery is the preferable field, the man coming out here will have unbounded scope for his genius, for all sorts of cases in all sorts of conditions will be brought to him. He will get more practical experience in three months in one of our Arabian hospitals than he would in twelve at home. He will be able, nay forced, to do work which at home he would merely look on at.

And then surely it is worth something, everything, to know that one is a part of the machinery for setting up the true religion and a new civilization in a dry and thirsty land, instead of being a mere wage earner at home. A friend of mine used to say that any fool could earn a living. Are you satisfied to do what any fool can do? Come out here and help us, you may rest assured you will never regret it. We are bound to win our fight. Every knee must bow and every tongue

must confess that Christ is Lord of All. But the sooner the forces on the field are increased and the sooner the fighters are supplied with all the munitions they need, just so much the sooner will victory be ours. There is no conscription in Christ's army, but the burden of proof is nevertheless upon you to show that the circumstances in which you are at present placed were meant by God to keep you out of Arabia.

Since this was written Dr. Van Vlack has become a member of the Medical Reserve Corps of the U. S. Army and thus will probably not return to Arabia until the present crisis has passed.—EDITOR.

## Dr. Harrison's Visit to Riadh and its Significance

By REV. L. J. SHAFER.

In the original plan of the Arabian Mission occurs these words, "Our ultimate object is to occupy the interior of Arabia." After a quarter of a century of struggle and sacrifice, God seems to have opened the way for the accomplishment of that purpose. Several letters have been received from members of the Arabian Mission calling attention to an event which may mean more for the future of our work in Arabia than any one thing that has happened in that Field since its occupation. We are quoting below the letters that convey to us the knowledge of this event.



RIADH FROM THE SOUTH

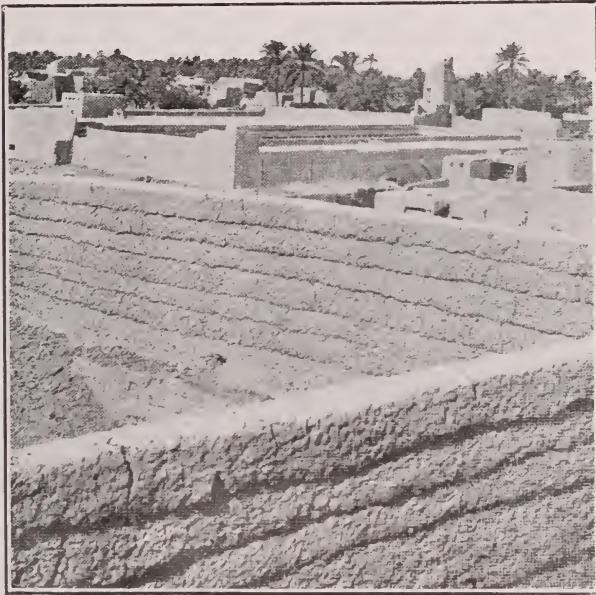
This photograph appeared in the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* for May, 1914, and is used here by permission of the Editor. It would probably be impossible to get similar photographs out of the country to-day.

In a letter from Mrs. Harrison dated Bahrein, July 14th, she says, "Dr. Harrison and I got back last week from Dareen, near Katif, where we had been for six weeks on an obstetrical case, when a letter came from Ibn Saoud inviting the Doctor into Riadh. He left Tuesday. If he really gets in, he will be gone for two months. As you can



imagine, it is very hard to have him away for such a long time, but when we realize that the prayers of the last quarter of a century are about to be answered and how much it will mean to the work, we are glad that the Father considers us worthy of the sacrifice and that He can use us in this way."

Referring to Dr. Harrison's visit to Ibn Saoud's capital in a letter written from Kuwait, July 20th, Mr. Calverley says. "We have received a note from Dr. Harrison dated the 10th inst., saying he has received an invitation to go to Riadh and asking to be remembered in prayer. I am glad to pass on the request."



**GREAT MOSQUE AND TYPICAL MINARET, RIADH**

This is also used by permission of the Editor of the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society.

Our first knowledge that Dr. Harrison had arrived safely at Riadh was gained from a postscript to a letter from Mr. Dykstra from Bahrein, July 30th, which read, "Just received a letter in Bahrein from Dr. Harrison in Riadh, stating that he arrived there safely and had a hearty welcome from the Sheikh."

In a letter written the next day, Mr. Dykstra gives further details, "You will rejoice with us over the fact that Dr. Harrison finally received a call from Riadh, and that he arrived there safely after a ten day trip. Being a guest of Ibn Saoud, his position is unique, and he will have all possible opportunity to find out the lay of the land

religiously. It is the Wahabi stronghold, and we need not expect too optimistic a report. The nearby Hassa may be better suited to our purposes, and this trip may give us a permanent entrance into this nearby province, for that is also under the jurisdiction of Ibn Saoud. We shall feel that we have not been in Bahrein in vain all these years if now it proves to be the gateway to inland Arabia, and the port of entry, not only of bags of rice as heretofore, but also of bundles of Gospels. Dr. Harrison's letter came back in a week's time, and that is about the best time that can be made."

In a letter dated August 29, Mr. Dykstra gives us the information that Dr. Harrison has safely returned:

"Dr. Harrison has returned from a trip to Riadh, the first time that one of our missionaries has been allowed to go to this stronghold of Islam. The Europeans who have visited the place previously were few indeed, and little of the real situation there was known, except by report, but now we shall have first hand information."

Riadh, Ibn Saoud's capital, is in the heart of Arabia and not more than 450 miles from Mecca. Ibn Saoud is the strongest man in Arabia to-day and one of the chief supporters of the new King of Hedjaz, formerly the Grand Sherif of Mecca, in his declaration of independence from Turkey. In view of these facts, the importance of this visit of Dr. Harrison to this interior capital of this strong chief can scarcely be exaggerated.

Although we have not received any detailed account of the reasons for this invitation to Dr. Harrison, undoubtedly the long standing friendship of Ibn Saoud and Dr. Mylrea of Kuwait had a good deal to do with it. Recently, when Ibn Saoud visited his friend and ally, the ruler of Kuwait, Dr. Mylrea had the remarkable distinction of receiving a personal call from these two powerful Sheikhs. Dr. Mylrea gives an interesting account of his connection with Ibn Saoud in a recent number of THE NEAR EAST. The following extracts from that article will give a clear idea of the situation there and of the unique character of this invitation which has come to Dr. Harrison.

"The man of strongest personality in Arabia to-day is Abd-el-Aziz Ibn Saoud; and his loyalty to the British, in a country where self-interest is the first instinct, is undoubtedly equal to considerable strain. He is a man who has only of recent years come into prominence, and prior to 1897 was an emir without a dominion, for Ibn Rashid held his capital, Riadh. But in that year Mohammed Ibn Rashid died, and Ibn Saoud, backed up by Sheikh Mubarek of Kuwait, who furnished him with fourscore camels and riders, seized Riadh suddenly one night, completely overwhelming its defenders. From that time Ibn Saoud's star has been in the ascendant, since in force of character he far surpasses the successor of Mohammed Ibn Rashid; and to-day he is the strongest man in Arabia and the man of the hour.

"It is now nearly three years since I first met Abd-el-Aziz Ibn Saoud. He was at that time in camp some twenty miles west of Kuwait, near a small town called Jahreh, and had come up from El-Hassa, which he had conquered from the Turks some two years previously. He wanted to discuss the then burning question of British and Turkish relations with Central and Eastern Arabia. He could not be persuaded to accept Kuwait's hospitality, most probably fearing Turkish treachery; for there were several Turkish agents in the town at that time, and Ibn Saoud's head was a tempting prize. In his own camp, however, he was absolute master, and could protect himself.

"In response to an invitation from the Sheikh, I went out to his camp to treat him and some of his people professionally. Having come up from malaria-stricken Hasa, many of Ibn Saoud's men were down with fever, and needed the benefits of modern medicine. His camp was a fine sight, and the two hundred odd glistening white tents made a brave show in the strong sunlight of a May morning. I was rather surprised to find white tents, but 'the black tents of Kedar' are going out of fashion among the aristocracy, and the 'house of hair,' the true Arab tent, is now the dwelling of the Bedouin only. As a matter of fact, the true Arab tent has been much overrated by travellers; for when it is a little bit old, it leaks like a sieve in a shower of rain.

"The Sheikh's marquee was at the end of a long avenue of tents pitched much truer to line than one expects in this part of the world, where no one has a straight eye. On my arrival I was at once conducted into the presence of Ibn Saoud. He rose to welcome me as I entered, and pointed me to the seat of honour beside him. The tent was furnished in the typical desert style. Persian carpets covered the floor, and, for pillows, camel saddles overlaid with sheepskins were ranged along the sides of the tent. A pleasing dash of colour was added by the gaudy camel housings which hung from the tent poles; but the air of comfort was toned down by rows of exceedingly good rifles which were hung up ready for instant use.

"The minute Ibn Saoud stood up, I was struck with the personality of the man. In stature he is a good six feet, and with his broad, powerful shoulders presents a truly athletic figure, clean cut and symmetrically developed. He has all the graces of a polished Arabian nobleman, and, in addition, his open countenance invites confidence. As he talks, you feel that he is sincere; there is a ring of truth in all he says. His frequent gestures accentuate the beauty of his shapely hands. Our conversation touched upon many subjects, but perhaps the following instance shows up the man's character in all its desert ruggedness. We were talking of the opening up of Central Arabia to the white men. He said, 'They will be welcome, but on one condition only, that they do not interfere in religious matters. In Central Arabia, we are not only one religion, we are all one sect. In many parts of the Mohammedan world you have all the principal sects living together—Hanifi, Maliki, Shafi, Hanbali. In Central Arabia we are all Hanbalis,

and there is absolute harmony in consequence. Introduce new faiths, and there will be an end of peace.' (The Sheikh's idea of peace, when one considers the endless raiding and petty fighting for which the Arab is famous, is obviously relative.)

"It was on November 19 of last year that Ibn Saoud next visited this part of the country. The circumstances were markedly different. On the former occasion the vague claims of Turkey to Kuwait were a subject of discussion, and the Crescent and Star still flew from Mubarek's flagstaff. At that time the decision of this question was of momentous importance to Ibn Saoud. England and himself regarded one another as unknown quantities, and the Turk was standing by, waiting to see how the sum would work out. Then Ibn Saoud would not trust himself in Kuwait even with the powerful Mubarek as his host; but now he is not afraid to take up his residence in the palace, in the very centre of the town. A new standard now floats over the palace, a simple flag, the word 'Kuwait' embroidered in white letters on a scarlet ground. As on the occasion of his last visit, he has come up from El-Hassa, not overland as formerly, but by sea, an honoured guest on board H. M. S. ———, under the personal escort of the Commodore. The sea is a strange element to the Sheikh. As he himself puts it, he is a son of the desert, not of the sea. He is not a little impressed with the wonders of a modern ship of War.

"On the following day a durbar was held at the palace, and it was then that I had the opportunity of renewing my acquaintance with Ibn Saoud. Among all the richly dressed Arabs in the room, he was easily the conspicuous figure. His magnificent bearing still commanded attention. The three years had only improved the attractiveness of his personality, and when presently the Chief Political Officer decorated him with the K. C. I. E., and the beautiful ornament glittered on his handsome brown cloak, he would have made an unusual subject for an artist.

"There were several fine speeches made at the durbar, but that of Ibn Saoud was remarkable for its importance and transparent sincerity. He laid great stress on the fact that Turkey had no real love for the Arab, and that, amid all her pretensions of friendship, she had always sought to promote enmity between tribe and tribe. England, on the other hand, was doing all she could to unite the chiefs of Arabia into a powerful and harmonious confederacy.

"Ibn Saoud is possibly quieter and more deliberate than he was three years ago, but his beautiful smile is scarcely ever absent from his face even when he is apparently engrossed in thought. There was never a trace of conceit in his kingly bearing, and I was reminded of Mark Twain's description of King Arthur where he made the King himself say, 'Armour is a proud burden, and a man standeth straight in it.'

"After the durbar I saw Ibn Saoud twice in the Kuweit Sheikh's *mejlis* and once when he made a personal call, and I was able to chat with him informally and further study the man. It is always an extremely difficult thing to estimate Arab character from a political point of view; but a straightforward friendship will, without doubt, make a valuable ally of Ibn Saoud, and go a long way towards bringing all the chiefs of Arabia into harmony—an event far more likely to-day than yesterday. Once the Arab chiefs can be made to realise that their welfare lies, not in constant feud, but in peace and mutual confidence, what England desires for Arabia will be accomplished. It may be that Ibn Saoud is the instrument that can bring those desires to pass."

The invitation from this strong Sheikh to Dr. Harrison to visit his capital and the welcome which he received on his arrival promises great things for the future. The prayers and the sacrifice and the patience of twenty-five years will not be in vain. The purpose of the founders of the Arabian Mission under God will yet be accomplished and the interior of Arabia will be occupied. It is imperative that we, as a Church, do our utmost this year to hold our own in our missionary contributions that we may be prepared when the time comes to "go up and possess the land."

N. B. In connection with this article read the latest word from Dr. Harrison in his article on the Present Urgent Medical Situation, written from Hassa probably on his way back from Riadh. His own report on the trip will be published later.—EDITOR.

## Some of Maskat's Shadows

By MISS CHARLOTTE B. KELLIEN.

The tears of a thirteen year old girl are usually neither rare nor alarming, but come, like sudden April showers, refreshing and sweetening, and making sunny smiles shine all the more brightly; but in Moslem lands where there is little or no carefree girlhood, such tears often spring from a tragedy too grave for the young heart. The child who came to the mission house to bid her friends a long farewell, was weighted down with a woman's sorrow, and from that sorrow there is no redress in Islam; indeed, not even a consciousness that redress is needed.

Why should she weep, the father would say, when all he intended was to give her a husband; but women are such unreasonable creatures, never satisfied with what Providence—at the hands of their exalted menfolk—has decreed for them. The girl, however, looked at the prospect before her with different eyes and a truer vision because of the experiences of women all about her. On the far-off western coast of Arabia lived an older cousin,—how much older it may spare our feelings not to know, and to this strange kinsman the father had determined to give her in marriage. In vain the mother pleaded for

delay, for the choice of a husband nearer home; her only answer was abuse and finally divorce and, hardest of all to bear, a refusal to allow her to see her child before she was forced away into a new servitude under an unknown master. Was it any wonder that she wept on the eve of her departure from the familiar scenes of her childhood, with a long and terrifying journey by sailing vessel before her, and in her heart a fear of the new husband and his relatives far greater than her dread of the deep and its dangers. And to leave behind her the only real love she had ever known, and perhaps would ever know,—this was the crowning grief as she faced the uncertain future.

And what of the mother's heart? It is for this that Moslem women rear their daughters and are mute.

Beggars seem to be an inescapable feature of life in the East, and need not surprise us wherever found; but as we take our walk at sunset along one of Maskat's dusty roadways, we are moved to wonder concerning this large company of suppliants that line the way, until the hideousness of some of the outstretched hands tells its own story. We have reached the leper colony outside the city gates, and here, when the heat of the day is past, the victims of this dread disease assemble, hoping for a few mites to meet the morrow's needs. Many of the passers-by are themselves miserably poor, and yet the appeal for alms is never made in vain; for in addition to the constraining impulse of compassion, they are moved by the thought of the reward stored up for them in the next world for every kindness shown to a fellow believer on earth. There are suggested horrors behind the covered faces of these suffering men and women, and other sadly marred faces which ought, in mercy to the public, to be veiled. Their houses are close by, small, mean places where the poor unfortunates drag out a miserable existence, without special medical work or organized charity to alleviate their lot. One feels a shock of apprehension at the sight of little children, at present free from the scourge, playing about unconcernedly in such surroundings, and one longs to be able to rescue them before the taint has entered and made of their young bodies a living tomb. There is a courage and an uncomplaining acceptance of their fate more pathetic than tears as the outcasts return our greetings and in reply to our inquiries answer only, with Islamic resignation, "Praise be to God." His name is constantly on their lips, but their hearts are as far from Him as their poor, diseased bodies are from purity. Would that they might understand and accept the message of the One who can grant them the cleansing that will give them the right to enter in through the gates into the city.

Grim tasks await the woman physician who would help remove the age-long burden of suffering from the women of Islam, some of them so revolting in their details as to remain forever untold. The proud, passionate nature of the Arabs is easily roused to unreasoning anger,

and since there is no demand in their religion for self-restraint and the keeping under of the body,—except in the yearly fast of Ramahan, when the feasting and rioting of the night time provide abundant compensation for any discomfort by day,—the result of a man's fury is sometimes so terrible as to surprise even himself in a saner mood. A man and his wife disagree over a daughter's waywardness and unwillingness to stay at home! As usual all the blame is placed on the mother, who does not acquiesce in her husband's opinion as dutiful wives are supposed to do, and the sequel is that she is brought to the mission dispensary with a great gaping knife wound in her abdomen, almost unconscious from loss of blood and shock. The husband meantime feigned himself mad, and because the woman was a former slave of one of the town's great men and the mother of his daughter, nothing could be done to punish him, lest that noble family be touched with a breath of scandal by even this remote connection with a criminal.

An immediate operation was necessary for the woman, and as one went about the unlovely work of preparation, the heart was not strengthened by the thought that a husband's hand had dealt the cruel blow. There was a question and a dumb wonder in the eyes she sometimes turned on us, as if the *Why* of her fate was a problem too big for her simple mind and she sought from us the answer to the riddle. The women of Islam are trained to suffering from childhood and survive much, but in this case the death wound had been dealt and could not be combated. All the doctor's efforts were in vain, and the neglected, sinful spirit went out through the darkness into the presence of the Great Judge. Remembering His justice, as well as His mercy in which Moslems so implicitly trust, we wondered then, as we wonder now, how the soul of this, our Moslem sister, found a resting-place for eternity.

## The First Lady of Kuwait

By MRS. C. STANLEY G. MYLREA

As we entered the room our hostess stood up and with a merry smile said in reply to our greetings, "Welcome, welcome, how are you? If God will, I hope you are well." She motioned us to the chairs which were obviously arranged for European visitors, while she sat on a rug on the floor. There were large hard pillows against the wall and a small and softer pillow was near her so that she could lean her elbow against it when she got tired.

She was small and stout with fair skin and her pretty Arab clothes falling gracefully about her made her a real picture. Her close fitting dress was of a delicate shade of pink silk and over that was a full robe, golden brown in color and also of silk. Around her head was the black veil of milfa which came down under her chin and was spread out over her chest making the pink and brown underneath even

more artistic. Peeping through her veil was a row of little gold coins sewed to the edge of a cap which fitted close to the crown of her head. Her cloak or abba, black crêpe de chine embroidered in gold thread around the neck and shoulders, was on her head, for the women wear their cloaks on their heads instead of their shoulders so as to be ready to cover themselves quickly if a stranger appears.

After we were seated we again asked about her health and the usual salutations passed between us. On the floor in front of her was a box of cigarettes as well as matches and an ash-tray, and very soon she put out a pretty little fat white hand and took up a cigarette. The hands looked all the whiter because of her rings. On both of her middle fingers were three narrow chased gold bands, on the third fingers were turquoise rings and on her little fingers were rubies and pearls. She threw off her cloak, letting it fall behind her, as she lit her cigarette and then we had a chance to see her bracelets. There were five on each arm, each bracelet being from a quarter of an inch to an inch in width. One pair consisted of plain gold bands, the next of pretty fret work and then another of filigree work and pearls. The last pair nearest her hands were of large amber beads. But she was really very plainly dressed to-day for we had seen on previous visits her many necklaces, loops upon loops of chains coming down to her waist.

It was a warm day and we had walked a long way and were very grateful when she called one of her maids-in-waiting to turn on the electric fan. Bye and bye various women came in from the harem and sat down quietly on the floor around the sides of the room and the conversation became more general. It was an upper room with one window opening towards the sea and another looking down on to the courtyard below. The room was an exceedingly plain setting for such a pretty picture, but the little lady graced the room rather than the room the little lady. There was a cheap European carpet on the floor and a black iron bedstead at one end of the room. The bedding was rolled up at the foot of the bed and underneath were odds and ends of china, a little tin trunk and a basket full of sewing.

On the verandah and round the door sat the women of the harem, both slave and free, all interested in the foreign callers. As the little lady lit her second cigarette one of the women sitting by her asked if we did not smoke and our hostess answered for us. Then she called her special maid, Fatum, the endearing form of Fatima. Presently she came and smiling faintly to us leaned down to take her mistress's order. She disappeared into an outer room but soon reappeared with a tray loaded with glasses of sherbet and we could hear the ice tinkling as she walked. Behind her came another maid with a folded bath towel thrown over her right shoulder and as we finished the sherbet, she offered us this towel to wipe our lips with.

We were asked a good many questions about our country and there were gasps when we said it took two months by sea to get there.



One woman said "But the sea! Aren't you afraid and don't you get sick?" Our little hostess said, "No, they don't get sick, they have become used to it." One of us turned to her and enquired if she ever was seasick. She replied, "No, but I have only been from here to Basra on a launch, I might on a long journey. But you! You are a daughter of the sea."

Another maid now came in and placed a low table or stool in front of us and yet another brought in a large tray perhaps three feet in diameter, and set it down on the stool. We were each given a bath towel to spread on our laps and then we were invited to begin. In the centre was a plate of apples and all the other good things were grouped around it. There were plates of water melon cut up in little squares, plates of musk melon cut up in the same way, a plate of meat balls, plates of different kinds of nuts and plates of Arab sweets. We were urged to try each kind and when we had finished without making much impression on the bountiful provision, we were told that we had eaten nothing. We were given knives and forks and spoons and so, in their opinion, there was no reason why we could not do justice to such a repast. One woman however who was sitting in a corner remarked that of course we couldn't satisfy our hunger if we ate with knives and forks. Our hostess laughed a merry laugh and said, "They know how—we—we—are Bedouh and eat with our hands; we could never satisfy ourselves if we ate with spoons." Cups of hot milk with a suspicion of tea in them and a great deal of rose water were now brought in and we were asked if the tea were tasteless or insipid. Alas! Would that it were. In addition to the rose water, each cup was half full of sugar.

We had asked if we might sit on the floor around the large tray and when all was taken away we all had pins and needles in our feet and were glad to go back to chairs.

The sun was getting low in the west and we felt that we had imposed ourselves on our kind hostess long enough, but we could not make a move to go until the coffee was served. Eventually we heard the clatter of the little coffee cups piled up one inside the other and there then appeared a slave woman who carried a pretty brass coffee-pot in her left hand and the cups in her right. She poured out a few thimblefuls of coffee for each of us. It was strong coffee and we had to drink three cups. The slave woman would have gone on pouring out cup after cup but when we had finished the third cup we gave it a little shake and as we handed it back, we said, "May your coffee never be cold" meaning, "May there always be some in your house with health and strength enough to make the fire and put the coffee on it."

We all rose then, and though our hostess said there was still time before sunset we began to say good-bye. Our little hostess asked us not to wait so long before coming again and in reply to our good-byes she said, "May you be in the faith and keeping of God."

And then we wended our way through verandahs, down steps, and across courtyards, until finally we reached the street.

## Dr. Zwemer's Visit to China

Mohammedism was brought to China in 628 A. D. The number has grown until there are now about 40,000,000. The missionaries have been so busy with the task of reaching the heathen Chinese that up to this time very little attention has been given to this problem. Dr. Zwemer's visit was calculated to stir the missionary body to a realization of the need and the opportunity, and the resolutions adopted at the various conferences show the purpose to reach out systematically to win these Chinese Moslems to a living faith in Jesus Christ.

Dr. Zwemer left Cairo on May 18th. En route to China, he visited India and held conferences with missionaries at Gujran walla, Mussoorie, and elsewhere. At Penang and Singapore he was also able to meet with the missionaries, while the steamer on which he travelled was in port. He arrived in Shanghai on July 7th, and began at once on the program which had been arranged for him by the China Continuation Committee.

He first visited the province of Honan in Central China, which has a considerable Moslem population. He was able to go to four of the largest cities, in three of which he addressed public meetings of Moslems. These meetings aroused a great deal of interest, and they made clear that Christian work among Chinese Moslems is possible, especially if it is done separately from the work done for those who are not Moslems. In each city, meetings were held with the Christians in which work in Moslem lands was described, and plans were proposed for further work among them in China.

Dr. Zwemer then visited the four missionary summer resorts of Kuling, Chikungshan, Peitaiho, and Chefoo. In these places large conferences with the missionaries were held, which have brought the problem of evangelizing the Moslem population of China more clearly before the missionary body than ever before. At each of these places, strong resolutions were adopted, and these have been referred to the China Continuation Committee to follow up and endeavor to realize.

Several days were spent in Peking, where an almost complete exhibit of Moslem literature in Chinese was secured. A number of the Moslem leaders were interviewed. An interesting incident was the presentation of a letter which they requested Dr. Zwemer to forward to President Wilson, asking the President speedily to end the great war. A considerable quantity of literature was distributed here and in the other cities that were visited. Dr. Zwemer left Shanghai to return to Cairo on September 13th.

The results of the investigations made during this vacation visit, in which Dr. Zwemer made ninety-two public addresses, will be published in the October number of *The Chinese Recorder*, the monthly missionary magazine published at 18 Peking Road, Shanghai.

## News and Notes

Bahrein.

The summer in Bahrein has been better than the average, which still may not be saying much in the way of comfort. A few days ago the wet and dry bulb thermometers stood at 88 and 89 respectively, and the day was not a scorcher, but a soaker.

One of our prominent men has lately married, or rather, has married once more, as this time he married for the seventh time. The young lady was not a stranger, as she is a cousin of the first wife, and they now live together in one house. But as though it were not enough to have a husband in common, they also have a brother in common, since at one time in history the mother of No. 7 was the wife of the father of No. 1, and they are therefore sisters to the same man, but not sisters to each other. Further, No. 1 is also a cousin to her husband's brother. The latter gentleman is therefore her cousin by birth, and her brother-in-law by marriage. He is also her foster-brother, as they were both brought up by the same mother. He then married his fostermother, and therefore became stepfather to the woman who already was his cousin, his sister-in-law, and his fostersister. For the sake of simplicity she therefore calls him "my father." Who's who in Bahrein would not be easy to answer.

The other day a man took hold of a woman's hand as she was walking along the street. He was brought to the justice of the peace, who ordered two men to proceed to flog him. When last seen, two tough canes had been worn out on him, and two new ones had been substituted. If all real crimes were punished in proportion in this city there would be a healthy reaction toward right living. But apparently there is sin and sin, and what we would consider a crime is here often accounted a virtue.

D.D.

## Missionary Personalia

A cablegram received on Nov. 3rd announced the safe arrival at Colombo of the outgoing missionaries. This party included Rev. G. J. Pennings, Rev. and Mrs. G. D. Van Peurse and their children and Miss Scardefield.

Rev. and Mrs. H. A. Bilkert and Miss Van Pelt sailed from Seattle on Oct. 7, the necessary American Passports for leaving the country and the British Permits for passing up the Persian Gulf and residence in Arabia having at last been received.

Rev. and Mrs. John Van Ess are expecting to spend some months in New York and vicinity after Feb. 1st, 1918. Many invitations await them to visit churches and groups that are specially interested in the work of the Arabian Mission.

Miss Gertrud Schafheitlin is expecting to return to America on her furlough in the spring of 1918.

# NEGLECTED ARABIA

You can feel the life of the Arabian Mission pulsing through every line of the articles in this magazine. It is so full of real human interest that quotations from it are frequently found in some of the most noted mission magazines.

In view of the high cost of everything connected with all our publications, we cannot afford to send out this magazine unless we know that it is going to an appreciative reader.

Last spring a card was sent with each copy and all those who appreciated the magazine were requested to use the card and tell us so. A number of cards were received, coming from all parts of the United States and even from Asia and Europe. Following these cards we revised our list but we are fearful that the names of some real friends of the publication may have been taken off because of our failure to receive a card from them.

In order that no mistake may be made, for this issue, we are using our former mailing list and we are asking you, if you have not previously done so, to drop us a card. **We cannot afford to send Neglected Arabia to you unless you want it.**

**If this notice is blue penciled it means that we have not yet received your reply and unless we hear from you saying that you want this publication, your name will have to come off of our mailing list.**

We should be sorry to have any of our friends miss this really valuable publication and we hope to hear from you at once asking us to keep your name on our list.



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